

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 6 remain in this application. Claims 1 – 3 and 5 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application in view of the amendments noted is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claim 1 was objected to because of certain informalities. To correct the informalities, the word “analysing” has been corrected to read --analyzing-- and the phrase “in which method” has been amended to read --the method comprising the steps of--. Applicant submits that these amendments address the objections to claim 1.

Claim 1 has also been extensively amended to improve the syntax and grammar of the claim. More particularly, “defining a fingerprint” has been changed to --forming a fingerprint--. Support for the word “forming” may be found on page 7, line 16 of the specification. Also, “defining the difference” has been changed to --deriving the difference-- as the difference is obtained from calculation rather than being defined. Further, “a normal process situation” has been changed to --an online momentary process situation-- so there is antecedent basis for “the momentary process situation.” Support for the process situation being “online” may be found on page 6, line 23 of the specification. Moreover, “relative to runnability” has been changed to --with respect to runnability-- to clarify that process situations are good or poor based upon runnability. Other grammatical and syntactical changes have also been made to claim 1.

Claims 2 and 5 have also been amended to improve the syntax of the claims.

Claims 1, 3, 4, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to specifically point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. More particularly, certain terms in claims 1, 3, 4, and 5 were found to be relative terms that render the claims indefinite.

With respect to the term “large number” in claim 1, applicant submits that the specification does provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree. Page 6, lines 9 through 11 of the specification read: “Negative fingerprints are generally based on a rather small group of variables (3 – 6). A good fingerprint, on the contrary, is based on many

variables (10 – 20).” Hence, it is clear from the specification that a “large number” of variables used to define a fingerprint according to a good process situation as claimed in claim 1 is greater than 6 variables and generally in the range of 10 to 20 variables. Furthermore, claim 4 further defines that the fingerprint according to a poor process situation is calculated from at most 6 variables and claim 5 further defines that the fingerprint according to a good process situation is calculated from at least 10 variables in the teaching stage. Therefore, the requisite degree of the term “large number” is also clear from the claims. For these reasons, applicant submits that the term “large number” is not indefinite.

With respect to the terms “good process situation” and “poor process situation” introduced in claim 1 and also present in claims 3 – 5, applicant respectfully disagrees that these terms are indefinite. It is clear from the specification and even from the claims that a “good process situation with respect to runnability” is one in which the process is running properly and achieving desired results. Likewise, it is clear that a “poor process situation with respect to runnability” is one in which the process is off target and not running properly. For example, page 6, lines 28 through 32 of the specification state: “Generally, runnability and quality are kept on target by monitoring the fingerprints of good situations in each sub-process. If a deviation then appears, the cause of the fault or deviation in general will be found considerably faster, if special detection of specific poor fingerprints is available.” Hence, it is clear that a “good process situation” is one in which the runnability and quality of the process are kept at target values. Further, merely because the terms “good” and “poor” are by themselves relative terms does not necessarily render the terms “good process situation” and “poor process situation” indefinite as it is clear that good process situations are desirable, target process situations and poor process situations are undesirable, off-target process situations. For these reasons, applicant submits that the terms “good process situation” and “poor process situation” as used in the claims are not indefinite.

Claim 3 has been amended to delete the term "substantially." Claim 3 now reads in part that --the fingerprint according to a poor process situation is narrower in its area than the fingerprints according to a good process situation--. Applicant submits that there is a definite relationship between a poor process situation and a good process situation in claim 3, namely that the fingerprint of a poor process situation is narrower than the fingerprint of a good process situation.

Applicant submits that the claims as amended are definite and respectfully requests that the Section 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, and 5 be withdrawn.

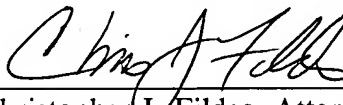
Claims 2 and 6 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were found allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable based upon the reasons stated above. Claims 2 and 6, depending from claim 1, are themselves in allowable form and have also been corrected.

This amendment and request for reconsideration is felt to be fully responsive to the comments and suggestions of the examiner and to place this application in condition for allowance. Favorable action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris J. Fildes", written over a horizontal line.

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